Internet

†2374. SHRI JANESHWAR MISRA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that internet is becoming the most convenient medium for having an access to the latest knowledge;

(b) if so, what action is being taken by Government for making this technology, which is full of whole heritage of knowledge, easily available to people at cheaper rates; and

(c) whether Government are contemplating any scheme for opening up of internet library booths (at cheaper rates) at different places?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Since Internet offer tremendous opportunities for education, commerce, trade and business dealings, the Government of India has taken a number of steps for expansion and promotion of internet applications in the country as detailed below:—

(i) Internet Policy has been implemented and parties in the Government, public and private sector have been licensed to provide internet services in the country. No license fee is payable for first five years and a nominal fee of one rupee is to be paid after five years.

(ii) The Internet Policy approved by Government provides inter-connection of networks and setting up of international gateways by the internet service provider independent of VSNL.

(iii) The infrastructure for Internet is proposed to be upgraded as below:

(a) Department of Telecom Services (DTS) is setting up national internet backbone in the country. Internet nodes are proposed to be set up in 324 cities in the country by 26th January 2000. The internet nodes in all district headquarters in the country would also be set up by December, 2000.

(b) Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are allowed to set up last mile linkage freely by fibre optic or by radio communication.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) The internet access is also allowed through authorised cable T.V.

(iv) The traiff for internet access have been recently reduced. Department of Telecom Services (DTS) have recently offered 20% concession on rental for leased lines taken and used for internet applications.

(v) Students are being given one time concession on internet accounts by Department of Telecom Services (DTS).

(vi) Access to internet on local call basis from the nearest internet node has been provided throughout the country except in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Leh (J&K).

(vii) The Existing departmental Public Call Operators (PCO) and Subscribers Trunk Dialing (STD) booths are proposed to be upgraded to public tele-info/cyber-centres. These centres will provide multiutility services such as internet, e-mail access and internet libraries.

Problems in the field of Internet expansion

†2375. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are facing problems in the field of expansion of Internet;

(b) if so, whether Government have worked any Scheme to remove the problems; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c). The Government is closely monitoring the expansion of Internet and as and when problems arise, the effort is to sort them out expeditiously so that minimum inconvenience is caused to the public. The following specific steps have been taken in this regard:

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